



FIA Matters!

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Submit stories by e-mail to FIA-Newsletter@michigan.gov

New name, new identity...new job title?

Gov. Granholm issued Executive Order 2004-35 on Nov. 12 that changes the name of the FIA to Michigan Department of Human Services effective Jan. 30, 2005. When the name change is effective this publication will be renamed **DHS Matters!**

There will be other changes coming soon including release of the department's strategic plan for 2005-08. Consistent with our new name, the plan process reviewed all the human services we provide. As a result we have established some clearer priorities and program directions we will be sharing. Something else might change later – your job title, depending on what you do.

Our new department name was chosen in part to reflect the broad array of programs and people we serve. Since the FIA name will become a thing of the past at the end of January, the job classifications known as Family Independence Specialist and Family Independence Manager will also be renamed. We are interested in hearing what you have to say about what you think those positions should be called. Please send an email with your idea for the position names to FIA-Newsletter@michigan.gov and indicate "Job name" on the subject line. We get a lot of mail in that box and using this will be helpful. Thank you in advance for your input. We look forward to hearing what you have to say!

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■ We couldn't link to it so read Executive Order 2004-35 online at www.michigan.gov/gov/0,1607,7-168-21975-104432--,00.html

Mimi's motto: don't give up

By Chuck Clemens, Adult Services Specialist
Roscommon County FIA, Roscommon
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Kirtland Community College in Roscommon County recently hosted an art show featuring Mimi Hampton, a 45-year-old Medicaid recipient. I am her caseworker and I admire her greatly. Not only is Mimi a gifted artist, she is heroic in a way very few people are. She approved this story about her.

Mimi has an unusual ailment called "generalized dystonia", a neurological movement disorder. Parkinson's disease is probably the best known of this class of diseases. Dystonia causes Mimi's body to lock up in painful, cramped positions. Imagine having writer's cramp all over your body! Sometimes she needs to hold wash towels in the palms of her hands so that her fingernails don't dig in and cut her. She needs assistance to escape from these spasms. For her to break free, another person has to apply firm pressure to her pressure points. She has also taught her dog, Buddy, to apply pressure to stop the cramping. She is very philosophic and calls the procedure "freeze tag".

When dystonia first began to cause her problems, nine years ago, she was a college student. Initially she was misdiagnosed as having arthritis. Then she was misdiagnosed with multiple sclerosis. A doctor finally figured it out. She is taking medication to reduce the symptoms but there is no cure. Mimi has been told she could resign herself to living in a wheelchair and becoming a total invalid.

Mimi had a better plan. She has what I call the right view of the world. She understands what is happening to her and she has made the decision to chart her own course. She has returned to college and has discovered she has remarkable skills as a computer-graphics artist. Her work was on display at Kirtland College from Sept. 21-Oct. 8. She has sold a few of her pieces and has pledged to donate a portion of any art-produced income to the Dystonia Medical Research Foundation. Mimi doesn't know what caused her dystonia. She isn't bitter or angry. Instead, she has reached inside herself and found the strength to survive and to thrive. She is an inspiration to me. I wonder if I have the strength of character I see in her. Mimi asked me to promote the foundation, so I am. They have a Web page on the Internet – www.dystonia-foundation.org If you feel so moved, donate some money. They can put it to good use.



Above: Mimi Hampton with her art works on display at Kirtland College.

Photo compliments of GettyImages.com

"This (inset photo) is one of my favorite pictures by Mimi," Chuck Clemens said. "This picture is called 'mystery rider'."

Chippewa FIA staffers get second place in chili cook-off that raises \$2,200 for charity

From Jennifer Storey
Chippewa County FIA, Sault Ste. Marie
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Hot, sweet or white, whatever your preference, you could find chili to match your taste at the third annual United Way "Local Heroes Chili Cook-off" in Sault Ste. Marie Sept. 14. It raised over \$2,200 for United Way charities and served as the kickoff for the fall campaign.

In the spirit of community a group of Chippewa County FIA employees entered a team. Each team was required to make three gallons of chili and serve their culinary delight while spreading enthusiasm for the United Way with cook-off patrons. Children and adults from all parts of the region attended the event, donating an entry fee in exchange for chili tasting. Over 25 teams entered chili including each United Way funded agency. Chippewa County FIA received second place in the "People's Choice" award category!



The Chippewa FIA Chili Crew (l-r): Linda Labron, Jennifer Storey, Kim Wilderspin and Diane Pederson. Not pictured: Beth Pupek, Karen Stabile and Lorna Bricco.

In addition to participating in the chili cook-off Chippewa and Luce County FIA held dress down days donating all funds toward this year's local campaign, proving it is "Cool to Give", the slogan of this year's State Employees Combined Campaign.

Got a story to tell? Send it to FIA-Newsletter@michigan.gov

Can you hear me now?

From Robert M. Adams, Director
Gladwin County FIA, Gladwin
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"Can you hear me now?" That's what Gladwin FIA clients can now say to 911 thanks to the cell phone FIA partnership with the Gladwin Masonic Lodge.



An unidentified fellow poses for Gladwin County's "Can you hear me now?" project.

The lodge scoured the community for discarded cell phones and reprogrammed discarded cell phones to dial only 911 for free. Mike Scott, chairperson of the cell phone project for the Masonic Lodge said: "Generous folks all over the county scrambled to find those cell phones gathering dust. Our initial effort rounded up 50 phones. More are pouring in as we speak."

The Masonic Lodge serves Gladwin as a community service fraternity that boasts over 160 members in the Gladwin chapter.

These phones will be lifesavers this winter. While most of our one-parent families and elderly families have a standard phone, traveling winter roads can be hazardous. Further, each of our foster homes will get an extra cell phone for emergency use.

Finally, some of our elderly folks need a second phone by their bedside because they can't easily get around. One client wears one around his neck. We thank the Masons for demonstrating that Gladwin is a community that cares about all of its residents.

"Can you hear me now?" In Gladwin – thanks to a generous community, the Masons and the partnerships with FIA – it sounds good.

White Chili recipe

Ingredients:

1 medium onion, 2 cups chicken broth, 1 green pepper, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup white wine, 1 clove garlic (chopped), 1 teaspoon cumin, 1 carrot, 1 teaspoon tabasco sauce, 2 stalks celery, 1 teaspoon sugar, 2 teaspoons chopped jalapeno pepper, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon white pepper, $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups cubed chicken, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon chili powder, 1 large jar Great Northern pinto beans and two 8-10 oz bricks Monterey Jack cheese.

Spray large skillet with non-stick spray and place over low-heat. Chop onion, green pepper, carrot, celery, and garlic clove and sauté until veggies are semi-tender. Par boil chicken and once cool, cut into cubes. Transfer the sautéed veggies, and chicken into a large kettle/pot, and add the chicken broth, wine, seasonings, and jalapeno pepper. Drain the pinto beans and add half the jar to the chili, reserving the other half. In a small bowl, smash the remaining beans and add to the chili. Once the chili is at a medium heat, cut the cheese into cubes and slowly add to the chili. They will melt down. Season with salt and black pepper to taste. Enjoy ☺

My Florida trip, Pt. 2

Genesee County FIA employee trekked to Florida with hurricane assistance team

From Jeffery Lemieux, Family Independence Specialist

Genesee County FIA, Flint

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Jeff Lemieux served with a team of state employees that helped during cleanup after hurricanes in Florida earlier this year. This is the second part of his story. The first part was published in the Oct. 26, 2004 issue.

The disaster areas we saw on our trip were unbelievable and difficult to describe. When we drove through Punta Gorda I almost could not believe what I was seeing. Punta Gorda was absolutely devastated by Hurricane Charlie. Houses, trailer parks, business, the airport, street lights, street signs, billboards and even palm trees were destroyed.

Scenes of hurricane destruction from around Florida (top to bottom): one of thousands of destroyed homes; the Punta Gorda police station parking lot; trees sliced off by hurricane winds.



It was an amazing sight; it really made me realize just how powerful these storms are. I wondered what happened to the people that live here? I was shocked when told there were less than a dozen fatalities in Punta Gorda. This was because many of the residents evacuated and Hurricane Charlie was so small in size, although very powerful, it hardly affected nearby areas.

In Orlando and central Florida the damage was mainly from Hurricane Francis. These areas suffered a tremendous amount of flooding because Francis was a huge slow moving hurricane. We found people living in horrendous conditions. Many homes not completely destroyed still had no electricity, no water and mold that seemed like you could actually watch it grow.

We found one situation in a trailer park that had no electricity or water and many trailers were partially destroyed. There were still people living there in the sweltering heat and humidity. We gave them water and notified our office and the Red Cross was immediately sent there. We hope we made a difference in those people's lives.

When we were in Pensacola, which was devastated by Hurricane Ivan, there was no water or electricity and we saw some incredible damage. Everything was affected by the storm. We saw a small forest where the trees were cut off about half way up. This must have taken tremendous force.

We saw people standing in lines, more people than I have ever seen standing in a line, waiting to get gasoline and water from distribution sites. The National Guard had soldiers placed on nearly every corner and there was a mandatory curfew in place. People could not be on the streets from 7 PM-7 AM. At night, even with nothing but a little flashlight to see with, it was very eye opening and humbling.

I will never forget this trip. The people I went with were absolutely incredible. What they do, and what they are capable of doing, is astonishing. The trip was worth every minute because we knew

the destination was a place where people needed help. When people saw the FEMA badges we were wearing, it was comforting to them knowing that their government cared and was sending help to them, even if it was just giving them the FEMA phone number and listening to their concerns and making referrals.

I will probably never forget that 1-800-621-FEMA phone number from saying it so many times. Also, I saw more of the state of Florida than I thought I would see in my lifetime. Unfortunately the Florida I saw was in total chaos but they will recover. In conclusion, thank God for Federal Emergency Management Agency and Emergency Management Agency Compact, because you never know what could happen.

Date: Nov. 8
To: **Sharlene Organ**, Family Independence Specialist
Kent County FIA, Grand Rapids

Subj: Thanks

Overworked, stressed and sometimes unappreciated. I just wanted you to know that I appreciate all the work you did to help me get my gas turned back on and to give you a heartfelt token of appreciation for writing the letter to my landlord and thereby saving me and my two little grandchildren from being homeless.

Rita Rogers

Grand Rapids

Your letters,
intercepted
and otherwise

Date: Nov. 4
To: **FIA Matters!**



**Marilyn with
her donation**

Subj: **Marilyn Roelofson**

We at Central Operations in Wayne County are very proud of our coworker Marilyn Roelofson. In October 2004 Marilyn donated her ponytail to Locks of Love ponytails for kids. The required length for donating is 10 inches but Marilyn surpassed that with a wonderful 14-inch ponytail. Some little child in need will now have a beautiful hairpiece thanks to Marilyn.

Noreen A. Mykiel

Wayne County FIA CFS Central Operations, Detroit

■ *Marilyn Roelofson and Noreen Nykiel are services specialists with Central CFS Operations.*

Date: Oct. 22
To: **Jeff Hudson**, Program Manager
Kent County FIA, Grand Rapids
Subj: **Bernard Hoogland**

(As) the supervisor for Bernard Hoogland I wanted you to know that a situation arose with one of our consumers that needed immediate attention. I spoke with him and one of his staff, Linda Rincones, yesterday concerning the matter. While Linda was not able to help me directly she was very professional and put me in touch with Mr. Hoogland without delay. I was very grateful that I did not get her voice mail, but rather she answered her phone both times I called.

Mr. Hoogland went above and beyond the call of duty as far as I am concerned and provided excellent and expedient service to one of our consumers. He did not need to do this, I am sure, but he recognized the situation as one that needed immediate attention and he handled it. He called me, leaving a message after "normal working hours", to let me know the matter was resolved. I know your agency is overwhelmed with high caseloads and excessive amounts of paperwork with limited staff to meet the demands placed upon them. You are fortunate to have these two employees on your staff.

Gregory Lunt MSW, Social Work Supervisor

Thresholds, Grand Rapids

■ *Bernard Hoogland is a family independence manager and Linda Rincones is an eligibility specialist with Kent County FIA. Thresholds is a Grand Rapids agency serving persons with developmental disabilities.*

Date: Sept. 21
To: **Sandra Deeghan**, Services Supervisor
Eaton County FIA, Charlotte
Subj: **Gina Gough**

I am writing to express appreciation for the efforts of Ms. Gough (who) has been training for the Prosecuting Attorneys Association child abuse unit for the past year. With the dedication shown by Ms. Gough, our program has prospered and we have received many compliments from workers around the state expressing gratitude of having a field worker share similar experiences with them. Since Ms. Gough's inception into the program we have seen an increase in our ratings for the forensic interviewing seminar we provide workers. I would like to thank you for allowing Ms. Gough to continue helping us in the important field of training on child abuse and neglect topics.

Julie A. Welch, Child Abuse Training Coordinator

Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan, Lansing

FIA Matters! is a product of Michigan's Family Independence Agency
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Larry VanDeSande, editor Submit stories by e-mail to: FIA-Newsletter@michigan.gov